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ABSTRACT

This document provides guidelines for gang awareness and prevention in the California school system. It is based on the belief that inservice training programs help school staff recognize early signs of gang activity, a necessary step to intervention. Following the introduction, chapter 1 offers descriptive information on gangs and their members, such as gang characteristics, risk factors, types of gangs, reasons for the appeal of gangs, and consequences of membership. The second chapter describes techniques for gang prevention and intervention, which include building self-esteem, preventing and resolving conflict, communicating effectively, resisting peer pressure, enforcing a discipline and conduct code, and creating a secure school. Chapter 3 discusses school and school district responses to gangs, such as graffiti removal teams, school safety and dress code policies, lists of school gang members, search and seizure issues, gang resistance curriculum, and partnerships with other organizations. The final chapter describes the roles to be played by school boards, the school district office, school-site administrators, teachers and school staff, and parents in gang prevention and intervention. Appendices contain California School Board Association (CSBA) sample policies on gangs, dress and grooming, and search and seizure; sample letters; and information on sharing confidential information. State and county contacts are also listed. Contains 43 references. (LMI)

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# ON ALERT! GANG PREVENTION

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EA 025 799

# SCHOOL IN-SERVICE GUIDELINES

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SACRAMENTO 1991



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# ON ALERT! GANG PREVENTION

## SCHOOL IN-SERVICE GUIDELINES

## Publishing Information

*On Alert! Gang Prevention: School In-service Guidelines* was developed by Rory Elder, Carolyn Fisher, and John A. Forthmann, special consultants, working with Mary Tobias Weaver, Administrator, Partnerships and Intersegmental Relations Office, California Department of Education. See Acknowledgments on pages vii and viii for the names of others who participated in the development and review of the document. The CSBA sample board policies in appendixes A, B, and C are reprinted by permission of the California School Boards Association.

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### Notice

The guidance in this handbook is not binding on local educational agencies or other entities or persons. Except for the statutes, regulations, and court decisions that are referenced herein, this handbook is exemplary, and compliance with it is not mandatory. (See *Education Code* Section 33308.5.)

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# PREFACE

The number of gang members in California continues to grow. Today, according to California Department of Justice estimates, they number between 175,000 and 200,000 in 2,000 gangs throughout the state. Their growth in numbers and activities threatens all parts of our communities, including our schools. We must act now to prevent gang activities in our schools, especially among our younger children and youths.

The need for gang prevention programs in our schools is evidenced by the large number of crimes committed on school campuses, the involvement of gangs in drug trafficking, the frequency of gang membership among minority populations, and the increasing number of middle-class and upper-class youths who are forming their own gangs or are joining established gangs.

Youth gangs pose serious challenges to schools. Their presence on campus interrupts the learning process, often instills fear in students and staff, and introduces certain criminal practices. Gangs must not be permitted to exist on school campuses. Even though gangs are a reality in many neighborhoods, their growth and influence in schools and other communities must be prevented. A critical participant in the effort to prevent youths from becoming involved in gangs is the school. Educators and parents, joining with law enforcement officials and representatives of the community, can make a difference. Before they can do so, however, educators and others must learn to detect the early warning signs of gangs.

Essential to any comprehensive plan to prevent the presence of gangs in schools is an in-service training program that focuses on an awareness of gang behaviors, the identification of gangs, staff behaviors that enable gangs to exist on school campuses, and classroom prevention strategies. The program should also emphasize the need for cooperation with law-enforcement agencies and their role in this effort.

People who have succeeded in dealing with gangs believe that working with preteen youths and their parents or guardians to prevent youths from joining gangs has the best potential for reducing the number of youth gang members. The ideal target grades for gang-prevention efforts are grades three through six, when students go through a period of transition, begin to envision their futures, and identify with role models.

Suggested principles to be considered in working to improve the awareness of gang activities in the school and prevent students from joining gangs are the following:

1. Informing students and staff about gangs and gang-related behaviors
2. Sharing information with parents and community members about gang activities

3. Communicating clear and concise messages that gangs are harmful and will not be tolerated
4. Identifying the consequences of involvement in illegal gang activities
5. Modeling respect for the laws and values of society
6. Building skills in decision making, goal setting, and resistance to peer pressure
7. Developing personal and social responsibility as the basis of self-esteem
8. Providing information on intervention and referral services and on the appropriateness of contacting responsible adults
9. Promoting healthy, safe, gang-free, and drug-free alternative or extracurricular activities
10. Avoiding gang glorification and glamorization to discourage curiosity and participation
11. Involving parents or guardians through a parent-support and educational component

A comprehensive program for preventing gangs on school campuses is possible only through support of school policies and the cooperation of the school district, county office of education, local law enforcement department, and other community agencies. School in-service training can begin this process. Note that because of the vulnerability of the special education population, all staff members—regular and special education personnel—will benefit from this training.

The guidelines provided in this document are a response to the growing need for schools, school districts, and county offices of education to address youth gangs; this document's specific focus is on gang awareness and prevention. Guidelines for alcohol and other drug prevention programs have been published in *Not Schools Alone*, issued by the California Department of Education in 1991.

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# INTRODUCTION

All school staff members—administrators, teachers, counselors, special education personnel (including those working in county-operated special day class programs), office clerks, bus drivers, food service workers, and custodians—have regular contact with students and are uniquely positioned to notice the warning signs students may exhibit when they have become active in a gang. When staff members are alert to those warning signs and able to recognize the presence of gangs, they can intervene and control the problem before it becomes a crisis. The early recognition of gang activity is an important prerequisite to gang prevention and intervention. In-service training can teach staff members to recognize the warning signs of gang activity and to use proactive programs that counteract a gang's appeal.

In-service training can have many dimensions. The most important needs are for school staff members to (1) use strategies that help students develop positive values, self-esteem, and skills for living gang-free and drug-free lives; (2) develop a knowledge of the causes of gang involvement and gang violence; (3) gain access to resources to reduce and eliminate the gangs' influence and violence; (4) develop the ability to teach social and resistance skills to students; and (5) develop the competencies that foster students' verbal and decision-making skills.

The goals of in-service training are to:

- Heighten the awareness of all staff members in regular and special education and other categorical education programs about types of local gangs, ways to identify gangs, the reasons youths join gangs, and the consequences of joining gangs.
- Involve staff members in using strategies and programs—focused on issues such as self-esteem, character and citizenship education, conflict management, and school affiliation—that prevent students from joining or continuing in gangs.

The method of delivering the components of in-service training addressed in this document depends on the amount of available staff training days, the length of staff meetings, the availability of resource speakers and materials, and the kind of school and community involved. Administrators and staff development coordinators should contact their local law-enforcement department to access additional relevant and current information, resources, and speakers on the activities of gangs in the community.

# 1

# GANGS AND GANG MEMBERS

Being alert to the early warning signs of gang activity and being knowledgeable about gang patterns are essential to successful prevention efforts. School staff members need to understand how gangs operate, what kinds of gangs there are, and why gangs attract youths; identify vulnerable youths and their reasons for joining gangs; recognize the presence of gangs; and know the consequences of gang membership.

## Characteristics of Gangs and Gang Members

Awareness of the problem is the first step in helping youths to stay out of gangs and in preventing gang activities on the school campus. Often, administrators, teachers, counselors, and parents deny that their students and children might be members of one of the 2,000 gangs operating in California. This denial masks the need for prevention programs and hides the reality of school-aged youths being involved in drug dealings and other criminal activity. Without full acceptance of the need, the full operation of prevention programs is impossible. To maintain campus safety and stability, school personnel must become aware of the early warning signals of the presence of gangs and develop an understanding of gang patterns and activities.

The following information provides an overview of the makeup of gangs:

1. A gang is composed of three or more people who form an allegiance for a common purpose and engage, individually or collectively, in violence and other criminal activity. (See *Penal Code* Section 186.22 [a].)
2. Most gangs have identifiable leadership and internal organization. Gangs are located in inner cities and other urban, suburban, *and* rural areas.
3. Gangs usually form along ethnic and socioeconomic boundaries.
4. Gangs usually identify with or claim control over a geographic territory or economic interest, usually in their local neighborhoods. Some gangs claim their territory by the kind of crime they commit within a geographic area.
5. Gangs are concerned about proving themselves, establishing a reputation, and being recognized for their work.
6. The typical gang member is usually undereducated but intelligent and often has a learning disability. Gang members often are

street-smart, are able to fend for themselves, and are accomplished manipulators and intimidators.

7. Although most gang members in the past were male, an increasing number of young females are forming their own gangs. Female gangs operate in a manner similar to that of traditional gangs.
8. Gang members are loyal to each other and protective of their turf. Male gang members are protective of their women, and female gang members are protective of their men.
9. Gang members often come from dysfunctional families. Frequently, other family members are also involved in gangs. In many cases the gang members have grown up in poverty and are disenfranchised from a system that values employment skills and economic security. However, gang members have recruited new members from bored, unconnected, and unsupervised youth from upper-class neighborhoods.
10. There are basically six kinds of gang members or persons likely to be involved with gangs:
    a. *Hard-core gang members* make up approximately 5 to 10 percent of the group and have been in the gang for the longest period of time. They have a history of incarceration, are often unemployed, and sometimes use or sell drugs. The average age of a hard-core member is early to mid-twenties, although some hard-core members are younger or older. The hard-core members are very influential in leading the gang and often are called "O.G.s" (original gangsters).
    b. *Regular gang members* are younger, usually fourteen to twenty years old. They have been initiated into the gang and often back up the hard-core members in word and action. As potential hard-core members they usually commit crimes for the older gang members.
    c. *Claimers, associates,* or *"wanna-be's,"* who average between ten and thirteen years of age, are not official members of the gang but act as or claim to be part of the gang. They often dress in gang attire, spend time with gang members, and write or draw the graffiti associated with the gang. They often commit crimes to impress regular gang members and tend to intimidate their peers.
    d. *Potential gang members ("gonna-be's"* or *"could-be's")* live in or close to areas where there are active gangs or have a family member who is already a gang member. This group is not yet attracted to the gang and can freely choose other alternatives, thus avoiding gang affiliation completely. This group can be influenced most easily by gang prevention strategies designed to improve self-esteem.

**Often, administrators, teachers, counselors, and parents deny that their students and children might be members of one of the 2,000 gangs operating in California. This denial masks the need for prevention programs and hides the reality of school-aged youths being involved in drug dealings and other criminal activity.**

e. *Peripheral gang members* move into and out of the gang for their personal interests or gain. This movement depends on the direction of the gang's activities at the time.

f. *Veteranos* are former gang members no longer active in the gang's day-to-day activities. However, they still may reside in the neighborhood. If the "home boys," gang members active in the neighborhood, become involved in a large territorial confrontation with a rival gang, the veteranos could become active and assist in the defense of their neighborhood or barrio. In some barrios of Los Angeles, veteranos may be forty or fifty years old.

11. *Cliques (hoods)* are subgroups of the larger gangs whose territory covers several city blocks. Many cliques are organized by age, school, or geographical area. These smaller groups have been known to act independently, although they are still affiliated with the larger original gang.

12. The further a youth is into a gang life-style, the more difficult it is for that youth to escape gang involvement.

## Risk Factors That Identify Vulnerable Youths

The perpetuation of youth gangs can be overcome if school staff members identify the risk factors that increase the vulnerability of youths to join gangs and work collectively to reduce those risk factors.

J. David Hawkins and Richard Catalano of the University of Washington have conducted significant research pertaining to risk factors. They have identified several characteristics that often exist before a person becomes involved in such self-destructive behaviors as drug abuse or gang involvement.[1] Youths who experience one or two risk factors do not necessarily become gang members or become addicted to drugs or alcohol, but they do face greater risk. The larger the number of risk factors present, the greater the risk becomes.

The risk factors related to gang involvement include factors in four main areas in young peoples' lives: family, school, peer groups, and community.

### Family

The following factors in a family increase the risk of gang activity:

1. A family history of gang involvement (brothers, sisters, father, mother, or others) or parents who have positive attitudes toward gang membership

[1] The risk factors identified by Hawkins and Catalano are specific to their research associated with drug abuse and related problems; see J. David Hawkins, "Risk and Protective Factors for Adolescent Substance Abuse: Implications for Prevention," *California Curriculum News Report*, Vol. 14 (April–May, 1989), 1. However, many of the factors related to the involvement with drugs are also associated with the involvement with gangs. See also Arnold P. Goldstein, *Delinquent Gangs: A Psychological Perspective*. Champaign, Ill.: Research Press, 1991.

2. Problems in the management of the family, including unclear or inconsistent rules for behavior, lax parental supervision, physical abuse disguised as discipline, and high levels of interpersonal conflict and violence
3. Reverence of younger family members for sibling gang members
4. Excessive use of alcohol or drugs in the home

**? QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATORS**

- Do students talk about their brothers, sisters, parents, uncles, or aunts in gangs?
- When students are having problems in school, do the parents or guardians contact the school to make sure that their child is getting the necessary help? What communication flows between school and home?
- Are there varied opportunities for parents and guardians to become involved in the school's program? How are they encouraged to participate? How are they made to feel welcome at school?
- What parent education programs are available through the school and school district?

### School

The main risk factors related to school include the following tendencies among students:

1. Early antisocial behavior, especially in the elementary grades
2. Poor academic performance, especially in the elementary grades
3. Performance at least one grade behind grade level in mathematics and reading (There is strong evidence that students in grade four who are academically behind their grade level—especially male students—are at high risk of self-destructive behaviors.)
4. Little or no commitment to school and school activities
5. Involvement in thefts, robberies, or extortion committed at school

**? QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATORS**

- Are there clearly articulated and enforced expectations for student behavior and consistent consequences for behaviors that fall outside the rules?
- How are school staff members helping all students to succeed academically?
- What evidence is there that school staff members have given up on certain students because the staff consider those students hopeless or incorrigible?

- How do school staff members let all students know they have confidence the students can succeed?
- How do school staff members help students develop personal, social, and academic skills? What opportunities do students have to practice those skills? What recognition do students receive for using the skills?
- What is the school's commitment to involving parents?
- What extracurricular activities are offered that give all students a chance to do something well?
- What is the attitude of school staff members about crime in the school? What are the consequences for students who commit crimes at school?
- Do school and school district staff members have a positive, consistent working relationship with local law enforcement officials?
- What kind of organized early identification system is available to identify the presence of gangs and gang activity on the school campus? What intervention programs are available to deter students from involvement in gangs?

### Peer Groups

The main risk factors related to peer groups include the following:

1. Alienation, rebelliousness, and a lack of bonding to society
2. Fighting and general aggressiveness in early adolescence
3. Friends who are gang members (one of the *strongest* factors related to gang involvement)
4. Favorable attitudes toward gangs and gang activities
5. Early exposure to gangs
6. A lack of positive social experiences related to community service and involvement

**? QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATORS**

- Are some groups of students excluded from or left out of social events or sports opportunities? What steps need to be taken to ensure their inclusion?
- When school staff members are aware of some groups headed for trouble, does the staff punish them; or does the staff help them learn ways to reduce negative behavior? How do staff members emphasize the consequences of and alternatives to gang membership?

- How have parents and guardians been informed of warning signs of gangs and negative peer group influence? What kind of training has been provided to school staff members?
- What opportunities are there for youths to become involved in positive social activities?

### Community

The following conditions are among the main risk factors related to the community:

1. Families living in social and economic deprivation (e.g., social isolation, poverty, poor living conditions, and low-status occupations)
2. Neighborhood and community disorganization (e.g., neighborhoods considered gang territories and poor surveillance of public areas)
3. A history of gangs in the community

**? QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATORS**

- What is the community doing to provide support and help to families in difficulty?
- Are school staff members aware of community agencies that provide services or assistance to families having difficulties? How are these agencies made known to parents, guardians, and students?
- How are school staff members involved in the community and active in making the community a safer place for children?
- What information do teachers have to enable them to identify gang members who might be in their classrooms? Do teachers know how and when to interact with gang members?
- How have teachers become aware of gang behavior and symptoms; for example, through posture, walk, or graffiti? (Graffiti are often written in schoolbooks, on assignments, and on classroom furniture.) What should teachers do if they observe gang behavior or gang graffiti?

## Types of Gangs

Gangs originally formed along ethnic and racial boundaries, but many gangs are now ethnically diverse. There is a new trend of youths joining gangs because of economic motives instead of ethnic alliances. However, some generalized statements can be made about how gangs are structured along ethnic lines. Ethnic youth gangs include gangs for Hispanics, African Americans, Asians (e.g., Chinese, Filipinos, Koreans, Vietnamese), and whites.

### Hispanic Gangs

Hispanic gangs, the most numerous, have the largest number of members overall. Historically, they established a given territory and participated in assaults to protect their turf. In the 1980s these gangs became involved in drive-by shootings, assaults, and murders. They took on an organized structure and included a wider age span of youths ranging from twelve-year-old to twenty-five-year-old members who were willing to fight and die for the gang. Most of the Hispanic gangs require new members to demonstrate their commitment to the gang by committing a crime, such as stealing a car, committing a burglary or robbery, or participating in a drive-by shooting. Hispanic gangs are characterized by tattoos, hand signs, and graffiti.

Although Hispanic gang members may be involved with drugs, the members usually do not openly sell drugs. Recently, however, some Hispanic gang members have associated with traditional African-American gangs (mostly the Crips) and are involved in the sale of rock cocaine, PCP, Mexican tar heroin, methamphetamine, and marijuana. Other criminal activities include robberies, burglaries, grand thefts, vehicle thefts, receipt of stolen goods, batteries, drive-by shootings, and murders.

There is generational involvement in gangs. Mothers and fathers as well as brothers and sisters may be already involved in a gang, and they encourage younger family members to join. When in the gangs, younger members are encouraged to commit serious crimes for the older members.

Hispanic female gangs are a growing phenomenon, exclusive of the traditionally male-dominated Hispanic gangs, and are committing drive-by shootings, automobile thefts, and assaults.

**There is generational involvement in gangs. Mothers and fathers as well as brothers and sisters may be already involved in a gang, and they encourage younger family members to join. When in the gangs, younger members are encouraged to commit serious crimes for the older members.**

### African-American Gangs

African-American gangs began as nonviolent, loose associations in the 1920s. Now most members are affiliated with either the Crips or the rival Bloods, the two most violent and criminally active African-American gangs, which can be found in most states. Historically, they distinguished themselves by their colors: blue is associated with the Crips, and red with the Bloods. This color identification has had significant consequences for some unknowing people who wore the "wrong" color in gang territory because of the assumed connection to the rival gang. However, some of the experienced gang members are now disguising their gang affiliation by wearing nondescript black-and-white clothing.

The organization of African-American gangs is based on criminal activity in the streets, particularly drug trafficking of rock cocaine, LSD, PCP, and marijuana. Crips and Bloods have established criminal networks for drug distribution throughout the country. In addition to drug trafficking, gang members engage in other crimes, including robbery, burglary, grand theft, receipt of stolen property, assault with a deadly weapon, drive-by shooting, and murder.

African-American gangs have few veteran gang members and many younger members. Members range in age from twelve to thirty-five years, with some members as old as forty years. They frequently use nicknames that describe their favorite weapon, physical or emotional state, or criminal talent.

### Asian Gangs

Asian gangs—especially Cambodian, Laotian, and Vietnamese—are increasing rapidly. These gang members vary from thirteen to thirty-five years of age. Other Asian gangs include Chinese, Filipinos, and Koreans. Traditionally, Asian gangs have been difficult to detect because members did not have a characteristic dress style or color. According to the Department of Justice, many Asian gangs have adopted certain characteristics of other ethnic gangs, such as gang names, hand signs, tattoos, and graffiti.[2]

Gang members often victimize members of their own ethnic group. They are also involved in selling drugs. However, their crimes of choice include residential robberies, extortion, automobile thefts, and gambling. Asian gangs are mobile and travel within the city, county, and state, as well as out-of-state, to commit their crimes.

Korean and Vietnamese gangs commit crimes and violent acts—such as extortion, battery, home-invasion robberies, assault with a deadly weapon, and murder—usually against people from their own ethnic group. They are mobile and, typically, are not concerned with battles for territory. Korean gangs specialize in burglary and extortion; Vietnamese gangs usually steal automobiles and car stereos and practice extortion.

Unlike other Asian gangs, Filipino gangs associate with Hispanic gangs. They have a territory and wear traditional Hispanic gang clothing. Their activities frequently parallel those of Hispanic gangs.

### White Gangs

White gangs, a recent phenomenon, vary in their involvement in violence and criminal activity. The Department of Justice estimates there may be as many as 5,000 white gang members in California. Some of the gangs are loose-knit groups of white youths and do not fit the definition of a gang until there is an act of violence. Skinheads, although small in number (approximately 400), are the most violent of the white gangs. Others, such as Armenian gangs, operate in a similar manner to that of traditional ethnic gangs. Because of the potential for violence and criminal activity, white groups should be included among gangs identified in in-service training programs on gang awareness and prevention.

There are four groups among white gangs: loners, fun-seekers or bashers, stoners, and skinheads. These gang members generally are not

[2] *Gangs 2000: The Attorney General's Report on the Impact of Criminal Street Gangs on Crime and Violence in California by the Year 2000.* Sacramento: California Department of Justice, Division of Law Enforcement, Bureau of Investigation, 1993, pp. 14–17.

concerned with territory but engage in single acts of violence or delinquent behavior. Their activities are usually designed to intimidate and threaten other groups.

*Loners.* Loners are white youths in an ethnic or multiethnic neighborhood who belong to the gang in that neighborhood, usually a Hispanic gang. Loners often come from transient, dysfunctional families. When the family moves to another neighborhood, the loner associates with the gang of that new neighborhood.

When loners join Hispanic gangs, they adopt the dress style and mannerisms of that gang. However, they are still usually perceived as outsiders. Long-term gang members do not trust loners and constantly question their loyalty. In most cases loners are pressured continually to show loyalty. The loner often is subjected to disrespect from other gang members.

*Fun-seekers or bashers.* Fun-seekers or bashers are very loosely organized groups of white youths. They conduct hate crimes against homosexuals or other ethnic groups, usually in urban and suburban areas.

*Stoners and skinheads.* These two groups of white youths are difficult to classify as gangs by definition until they become involved in hate crimes or violent acts. The groups appeal to youths who are alienated from the mainstream of society.

1. Stoners are a loose-knit group associated with drug use, heavy-metal music, the occult and supernatural, and the worship of Satan. Stoner gangs are isolated groups, not usually involved in street violence. If they do become involved with violence, it is usually in association with skinheads.
2. Skinheads are usually young males with shaven heads who often wear black or dark-colored jeans, heavy steel-toed boots, suspenders, and bomber jackets. Some members, however, now have short or long hair to disguise their gang affiliation. They usually bear racist-related tattoos, such as WSU (White Students Union), AYM (Aryan Youth Movement), swastikas, and Nazi flags.

   Skinheads are associated with heavy-metal music, the supernatural, and Satan worship. Some members adhere closely to the philosophy of white supremacy and commit hate crimes against minority groups. Usually, these racist skinheads are connected with adult racist organizations, such as the Ku Klux Klan or the White Aryan Resistance. Other skinhead groups are nonracist and do not associate with a neo-Nazi movement or wear the swastikas and tattoos of the Hitler era.

   The typical skinhead gang varies in size from five to 20 members, and the ages of the gang members range from the early teens to the mid-twenties. The gang's graffiti, which include swastikas and lightning bolts, are used to deface property rather than mark gang

**There are four groups among white gangs: loners, fun-seekers or bashers, stoners, and skinheads. These gang members generally are not concerned with territory but engage in single acts of violence or delinquent behavior. Their activities are usually designed to intimidate and threaten other groups.**

territory. Female gang members are becoming increasingly involved in skinhead-related hate crimes and have joined in gang attacks on victims targeted by male gang members.

## Indications of Gang Involvement

Educators must be alert to important signals that warn of the possibility of gang involvement among students. If any of the following warning signs are present on a school campus, administrators and staff members should initiate appropriate prevention and intervention strategies:

1. An informal dress code that is followed by a few students (e.g., hats, scarves, jewelry, shoe laces, colors, or insignias)
2. Hand signs passed back and forth among students
3. The use of new nicknames
4. The appearance of graffiti on school property, book covers, notebooks, and clothing
5. Newly acquired and unexplained "wealth," often showered on or shared with peers (including anything from sharing bags of candy with younger children to a flurry of more extravagant spending by older youths)
6. Increased violence on campus, including an increase in the number of referrals for assault, battery, and unlawful fighting; possession of weapons on campus; and use, sale, or possession of drugs
7. Tattoos on students' hands or arms
8. Expressions of racism or hatred toward religious groups or people with certain sexual preferences

### Graffiti

Graffiti are a serious signal of gang activity. Gangs use graffiti to mark their territory, tell of their existence, brag about superiority, claim credit for a crime, or target the rival gang or gang member as a potential victim of a shooting or other violence. There are some variations in the use of graffiti among different gangs and in the graffiti done by "taggers," as described below:

*African-American gangs.* African-American gangs use graffiti to mark territory of the gang and to proclaim superiority over other gangs. The lettering is plain and often crude. The graffiti usually promote the individual gang member rather than the entire gang.

*Hispanic gangs.* The graffiti of Hispanic gangs traditionally identify a gang's territory. The graffiti consist of very stylized three-dimensional or block lettering with serifs. This kind of graffiti writing is an acquired skill, which takes a great deal of time and practice to perfect. Children may begin learning it while in the elementary grades. Graffiti can be found on

notebooks, school papers, bus benches, clothing, tennis shoes, and gym clothes and inside baseball caps.

Gang members use graffiti to show pride in their gang, and members often use their street names, or *placa*, in the graffiti. Other elements of the graffiti include the gang's name or logo and, often, a statement of the gang's power and influence.

*Asian gangs.* Most Asian gangs now use graffiti. Some Asian gangs as well as South Pacific Islander gangs use graffiti to identify their territory, and some identify with African-American gangs and call themselves Crips.

*Taggers.* "Tagging" is a recent development related to graffiti. The tagger adopts a nickname, or "tag," and writes it on as many objects as possible, including utility poles or boxes, traffic lights, and freeway signs. The tagger chooses his or her tag for a variety of reasons, which may include the way the word sounds, the ease he or she has in writing it, or a personal preference for the word or number. A beginning tagger also may receive a tag from a more experienced member of the tagging group, or "crew."

Youths who are taggers may go through several tags before selecting a personal one to use and usually drop their preferred ones if caught by the police or challenged by another tagger with the same or similar tag. These youths often have a back-up tag in case they need to change the one they were using.

The style of graffiti chosen by the tagger usually resembles handwriting, but the words are difficult, if not impossible, to read. The letters may be intertwined and highly stylized or resemble large bubble or gang-style lettering.

Taggers are most active during the weekend because taggers often are in school during the week. They can tag any time of day, and the object they plan to tag may dictate the time they choose to work. If they tag a freeway sign, divider, or barrier, they usually wait until night or early morning. Buses are a target at any time. If their target is one that can be used for an elaborate display, such as an industrial area or an abandoned building in an out-of-the-way place, taggers usually wait until the early hours of Saturday or Sunday, when there are the fewest number of people around. Remote targets are appealing because there are fewer chances of being discovered by law enforcement officials.

Most taggers belong to a crew, and some taggers may belong to or associate with more than one crew. A typical crew has six to 12 members, although some crews may have 100 or more members. Before youths can join a crew, they generally demonstrate their drawing ability, then "mob" an object by putting up as much graffiti as possible in a short period of time. After acceptance into a crew, taggers usually work in pairs or in groups of three or four. Young females may accompany the tagging crew and participate in the tagging, but most taggers are males between thirteen and eighteen years of age.

**Graffiti are a serious signal of gang activity. Gangs use graffiti to mark their territory, tell of their existence, brag about superiority, claim credit for a crime, or target the rival gang or gang member as a potential victim of a shooting or other violence. There are some variations in the use of graffiti among different gangs.**

Youths often join the crew for the same reasons other youths join a gang: recognition, excitement, problems at home or school, or low self-esteem. Taggers are not usually gang members, although for some youths tagging is the first step to becoming a street gang member.

To avoid law enforcement officials and gang members, taggers typically dress in a manner not to draw attention to themselves. However, some taggers wear clothing that displays the word "Kings," a common name used in crew names, or wear an oversized cloth belt that hangs approximately 12 inches in the front and displays the initials of their crew.

A tagger's usual tools include spray paint, markers, and scribes (sharp objects used for writing on glass or plastic). The current Krylon brand of spray paint is most popular with taggers because a variety of spray-can tips can be used on the Krylon spray can. For example, the tips with fine spray from Testor brand spray cans fit on the Krylon can, so do the wide-spray tips from oven and window cleaners. Taggers often carry their spray-can tips in their mouths to avoid detection by authorities and to keep the tip clean and ready for tagging. Popular markers resemble large crayons in a tube or hold paint in a tube. Scribes can be anything that will cut glass or plastic, such as glass drill bits, small pieces of sandpaper, rocks, and sewing needles. Taggers usually hide their scribes inside an ink pen or mechanical pencil to avoid detection and will discard the items if there is a chance the authorities will stop them for questioning.

Law enforcement officials in Los Angeles County report an increase in violence committed by taggers and crew members.[3] The more crew members tag, the more the opportunity arises for conflict with other crews or gangs. Some of the conflicts are settled through fighting. This kind of violence has caused some taggers to carry weapons, including guns and knives, for protection. Tagging crews have participated in activities associated with gang conduct, such as insulting rival crews by crossing out the tags of those crews and committing drive-by shootings.

The seriousness of tagging extends beyond the cost of graffiti removal to the monetary loss to businesses from theft and to the cost to homeowners from the devaluation of property because of the graffiti in their neighborhoods. In addition, there are human costs when youths move from being taggers to being gang members. Tagging prevention activities parallel graffiti prevention efforts and should have a high priority not only in schools but also in the community and in law enforcement.

The following glossary of terms was created by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and may assist educators in interpreting conversations by taggers.

| | |
|---|---|
| **All city** | To tag extensively, not just in one area. |
| **Arrowhead** | A type of scribe that is a glass drill-bit resembling an arrowhead. |

[3] John Maxwell and Dennis Porter, "Report on Taggers." Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Transit Services Bureau, Metro Blue Line, February 1993, p. 5.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Back-up** | Another tag name used by a tagger, but with less frequency. The back-up tag is used when the tagger's main tag is known by school authorities or law enforcement personnel. |
| **Battle** | A contest between different taggers or crews to see who can write their tag the most times in a certain area within a given period of time. |
| **Billboards** | The advertising signs on buses. |
| **Bite** | To adopt a similar or the same name as another tagger or crew. |
| **Bomb** | To put a series of large letters on a wall, usually in more than one color. |
| **Bombing run** | The time in which a tagging crew gets together with the express purpose of putting up as many of their tag names and the name of their crew as they can on public or private property. |
| **Buff** | To remove graffiti from an object. |
| **Burner** | Creation of a good wall mural. |
| **Burnt** | Something that can no longer be used. |
| **Cap** | A spray-paint tip or nozzle. "Fat" caps spray a wide line, and "testors" spray a thin line. |
| **Check-court** | Battering of a fellow crew member as a form of discipline. |
| **Crew** | A group of taggers with their own distinct name. |
| **Def** | A tagger with a high level of skill who is considered to be "cool." |
| **Destination** | The front of a bus. |
| **Dis** | To show disrespect for someone by writing over or on another tagger's work. |
| **Fat cap** | A spray-can tip that sends out a wide stream of paint. |
| **Fresh** | A tagging style or piece that is considered well done. |
| **General** | A style of tagging not considered unique. |
| **Getting up** | Putting a tag on objects. |
| **Grill** | The back of a bus, either inside or outside. |
| **Heavens** | The large overhead freeway signs. It sometimes refers to any high object to tag. |
| **Head** | The most skilled tagger in a crew. |
| **Heads-up** | To put graffiti on an object. |
| **Hero** | A citizen who tries to stop someone from writing graffiti and attempts to detain the tagger for law enforcement. |
| **Hit-up** | To put graffiti on an object. |

Every young person needs feelings of self-worth, identity, acceptance, recognition, companionship, belonging, purpose, and security. When families, schools, churches, and communities cannot meet those needs, gangs may.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Housers** | A dancing group, posse, or crew that dances at parties held in a house. |
| **House-name** | A unique nickname of a dancing posse or crew member. |
| **Illegal wall** | A place where a tagger does not have permission to do murals or tags. |
| **Jack** | To steal a tagger's supplies, usually by robbery. |
| **Jump in/out** | The initiation rite, similar to that of gangs, in which crew members beat a person who wishes to join or leave the crew. |
| **Kings** | Better than all the others. |
| **Kill a wall** | To cover a wall with graffiti. |
| **Landmarks** | Fixed street objects that are targets for tagging, such as street light poles, electric poles, and city signposts. |
| **Legal wall** | A place where a tagger has permission to do murals or tags. |
| **Mob** | To put as much graffiti on an object as possible in a short period of time. |
| **O. G.** | "Original graffiti" artist who has been tagging for a long time. |
| **Oner** | A tagger who does not belong to a crew. |
| **One-times** | The police. |
| **Paint stick** | A type of marker pen filled with paint. |
| **Piece** | An elaborate graffiti mural on a wall or other large object. |
| **Piece book** | A book that taggers use to practice their personal style of graffiti, plan murals, or record pieces they have completed. These books also serve as scrapbooks of graffiti and murals completed by the tagger or crew. |
| **Rack** | To steal paint, markers, or other graffiti devices. |
| **Rank** | Status within the crew. Usually, a veteran tagger influences what the crew will do. |
| **Rank-out** | Failure to claim one's crew when questioned by authorities. |
| **Rolled-up** | Arrested. |
| **RTDs** | Buses belonging to the Rapid Transit District. |
| **Sakura's** | A brand of marker containing paint. |
| **Scribe** | An object used to write on glass or plastic. |
| **Shovel** | A scribe that is a glass drill-bit in the shape of a shovel. |
| **Slash** | To insult or challenge another tagger or crew by crossing out the name of that tagger or crew. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Spot** | A store from which to shoplift, usually kept a secret from other taggers or crews. |
| **Streak** | A brand of marker similar to a large crayon (Meanstreak). |
| **Sweated** | To be questioned by the police about being a gang member or tagger. |
| **Tag** | A nickname or the act of putting graffiti on an object. |
| **Tagger** | A person who adopts a unique nickname and illegally puts the nickname on objects. |
| **Take-out** | To defeat another tagger or crew in a battle. |
| **Testor** | A spray-can tip that sends a thin stream of paint. |
| **Throw-up** | Large bubble-style letters drawn quickly on an object. |
| **Toy** | A beginner or tagger who writes in the manner of an amateur. |
| **Transits** | Non-RTD buses. |
| **U/C** | Undercover, plainclothes law enforcement personnel, or anything that is not what it appears to be, such as a scribe inside an ink pen. |
| **Wild style** | Unique style of tagging that includes overlapping letters. |
| **Write** | To put a tag or graffiti on an object. |
| **Writer** | A person who does murals (or pieces) or puts a tag on objects. A person who does a mural or piece considers himself or herself to be a writer and does not like to be associated with taggers. However, a person who only tags and does not do murals or pieces may call himself or herself a writer. |

## Why Gangs Attract Youths

Every young person needs feelings of self-worth, identity, acceptance, recognition, companionship, belonging, purpose, and security. When families, schools, churches, and communities cannot meet those needs, gangs may. Gangs often can supply what traditional systems have failed to provide.

Youths join gangs for a variety of reasons, including fear, curiosity, excitement, prestige, peer pressure, lack of education, poor employment skills, a family history of gang involvement, economic gain, and a lack of alternatives. The attraction to joining a gang may include the following:

1. Gangs can provide teenagers with friendship, social bonding, shared experiences, tradition, and feelings of belonging. Gang leaders may become hero role models as they take charge, protect other gang members, and make decisions and rules about the group's behavior. Youths who experience failure in traditional systems—especially in school—often experience success in gangs.

2. Affiliation with a gang can be a lucrative means of obtaining economic resources and economic freedom, which are acquired through selling drugs and committing thefts and burglaries. The implications of those activities usually are not a consideration. Members live for the present and cannot envision the future. Most members have no goals or future plans.
3. Gangs provide protection and safety. A youth may believe that personal survival depends on joining the neighborhood gang. Gang members from other neighborhoods treat non-gang members as enemies simply because of where they live. Only by joining the neighborhood gang can one receive protection from those attacks. In some neighborhoods gangs have been an integral part of barrio or community life for generations. For the youths in those neighborhoods, an established tradition motivates them to join a gang.
4. Gangs provide status and prestige. Gang membership fulfills the needs youths have for self-esteem, social interaction, recognition, and economic and psychological survival.

Lacking formal education or viable employment skills, gang members are left dependent on the gang and its illegal activities for economic survival.

The lure of gangs can be so strong that some youths are willing to kill to join—and they may have to die to get out. Youths are likely to remain in their gangs because of the sense of security, power, and prestige they gain from membership. Gang members often see no other alternatives because of their lack of trust of anyone outside of their gang.

## Consequences of Gang Membership

Youths who are seduced into gangs pay a high price for membership. Some of the consequences of joining a gang are as follows:

1. Initiation rites often involve committing serious criminal, usually violent acts to prove loyalty. Gang membership almost guarantees one a criminal record, not to mention the physical risks and dangers of violent activities inherent in membership. Members risk going to jail, using drugs and alcohol, and acquiring a police record that could hamper desirable future job opportunities. In addition, gangs often depend on the youngest members to carry out the most serious offenses because juveniles receive more lenient treatment and lesser penalties when found guilty of a crime.
2. Joining a gang often includes isolating oneself from mainstream, socially acceptable activities and goals. This course of action creates high truancy and dropout rates among gang members. Lacking formal education or viable employment skills, gang members are left dependent on the gang and its illegal activities for economic survival.
3. By participating in the gang's criminal activities, members expose themselves and family members to bodily injury or death, bring about fear and anguish in the family, and may create financial hardships for the family.

# 2

# GANG PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

Gang prevention and intervention programs include school-based programs, parent-involvement programs, and community programs. A preventive approach is necessary to avoid the disruption that youth gangs cause, particularly on the school campus. To counter the influence of gangs, school-based programs need to provide a variety of alternatives, including a staff awareness effort, disciplinary measures, and the involvement of parents. The program should provide positive role models, opportunities for youths to be affiliated with the school, consistent positive discipline, and conflict resolution.

A successful preventive approach builds self-esteem. It considers and addresses the incentives that draw youths into gangs: fear, peer pressure, lack of education, poor employment skills, a family history of gang involvement, and lack of alternatives. Programs designed to reinforce socially constructive behavior, offer alternative employment and recreational and vocational activities, emphasize self-accountability, and present positive lifestyle options can provide the direction and motivation necessary for students to resist involvement with gangs. (Using fear and intimidation to combat gang behavior only compounds the problem because those are the tactics used by gang members themselves.)

The school's staff members need to understand that gang activities in the school can mirror those occurring in the community. Therefore, school staff members have a duty to be knowledgeable about and responsive to community conditions that have the potential to spill over into the schools. The ultimate goal of gang awareness and prevention activities is to provide safe and secure campuses in which students can learn and teachers can teach effectively. School board policy is an important support in implementing safety rules and disciplinary procedures at the school site. Existing policies, expectations, and rules should be reviewed to determine the degree to which they address gang activity. See appendixes A, B, and C for sample policy statements.

## Building Self-esteem

Self-esteem, as defined by the California Task Force to Promote Self-esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility, means "appreciating my own worth and importance and having the character to be accountable for myself and to act responsibly toward others."[1]

[1] *Toward a State of Esteem: The Final Report of the California Task Force to Promote Self-esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility*. Sacramento: California Department of Education, 1990, p. 1.

Most research on self-esteem indicates that there is a moderate inverse correlation between a student's self-esteem, together with academic performance, and the student's involvement in unlawful activities, such as participation in gangs. High self-esteem can free some students to be more productive and open to constructive criticism, whereas it can make other students complacent and immune to constructive criticism. Low self-esteem may cause a lack of motivation in some students but can lead to valiant efforts by others to compensate for perceived inferiority. Despite the conflicting research results on self-esteem, many researchers, policymakers, and education practitioners agree that self-esteem and personal and social responsibility should be priorities in our schools. When students develop skills in personal and social responsibility, they will have more options that make ethical choices and life's challenges easier.

**Using fear and intimidation to combat gang behavior only compounds the problem because those are the tactics used by gang members themselves.**

School staff members play a significant role in shaping a student's self-esteem and personal and social responsibility. Attitudes conveyed to students by staff members can affect the students' performance. The famed "Pygmalion effect," documented in research in the late 1960s, demonstrated that when teachers believe their students are capable of achieving, they structure the learning environment and experiences to ensure that students will achieve those high expectations. Similarly, teachers who believe that students are not capable of high rates of success find that prophecy to be self-fulfilling. Teachers who have low expectations are likely to instill a sense of failure in students, leading to lowered self-esteem. Therefore, one of the most important things teachers can do is to have high expectations for all students.

When school staff members establish the enhancement of self-esteem as a high priority, they should examine the various practices and factors in the school environment that most contribute to or detract from students' self-esteem. The following activities to enhance students' self-esteem are suggested in a guide developed by the American Association of School Administrators:[2]

1. Use teaching techniques that help students develop a sense of achievement, such as beginning each class with a question or two from the previous day's lessons.
2. Encourage students to work in cooperative groups to solve problems.
3. Offer opportunities for students to make choices, take the initiative, and practice autonomy by offering students a variety of learning options based on various learning styles.
4. Help students develop a "success mind-set" by encouraging the use of words that do not depict failure; instead, use words that

[2] Adapted from Kristen Amundson, *Building Self-esteem: A Guide for Parents, Schools, and Communities*. Arlington, Va.: American Association of School Administrators, 1991, pp. 14–15. Used with permission.

lead to searching for other options. Words such as *glitch, problem,* or *snag* lead to finding alternatives and learning new solutions.

5. Use positive reinforcement and praise students for effort as well as for achievement. For example, by saying "I like the way Ahmid is working," you acknowledge the student and his efforts.
6. Praise specific behaviors. A comment such as "I appreciate the way you assisted Camille in setting up today's science experiment" reinforces the behavior demonstrated and is more likely to boost a student's self-esteem than the comment "I think you're a great person."
7. Avoid setting students up for criticism by their peers. For example, ask students privately if they need extra help.
8. Create a rotating display of students' best work. Let the students select the work they would like to display.
9. Teach students how to set and achieve goals by helping them break down large goals into small, achievable steps.
10. Telephone or write to parents to inform them of students' successes. Set a goal for a minimum number of positive contacts with parents each week.
11. Teach students ways to accomplish new tasks. Remember that "I can't" often means "I don't know how."
12. Teach students to appreciate diversity by highlighting the values of various ethnic or racial groups in the school and community.
13. Encourage interactions with students of different ages through cross-age teaching, a peer tutoring program, or cooperative learning experiences.

Building self-esteem can be viewed as a sequential, step-by-step process (see the following chart). It begins by establishing a sense of security and a sense of identity so that participants have a realistic self-understanding. Teachers, counselors, support staff, and administrators play a key role in nurturing the self-esteem of all students. With a heightened level of self-esteem, students who are vulnerable to the influence of gangs have a greater chance of resisting the pressures to become involved in gangs.

A school's climate needs to encourage cooperative action among all students and staff. Team-building efforts for staff members are as important as the team-building efforts in a teacher's classroom. Encouragement of staff teamwork should be based on ceremonies and awards and include opportunities for input, involvement in decision making, access to decision makers, and support to make teachers and other staff members effective in their jobs.

**MESSAGES AFFECTING SELF-ESTEEM**

**These are messages that can boost students' self-esteem:**

- **Knowing you, I'm sure you will do fine.**
- **You can do it if you try.**
- **I have faith in you.**
- **You're trying your hardest, and your work will pay off.**
- **I can see you put a lot of effort into that.**
- **You can figure it out.**
- **That was a good try. Don't worry about the mistake.**
- **That's a challenge, but I'm sure you'll do fine.**

**These are expressions that can hurt a child's self-esteem:**

- **Knowing you, I think you should do more.**
- **You usually make mistakes, so be careful.**
- **I doubt that you can do it.**
- **You can do better.**
- **That's a good job, but it needs work.**
- **Better get some help.**
- **If you can't do it right, don't do it at all.**
- **That looks too difficult for you to try.**

Source: Kristen Amundson, *Building Self-esteem: A Guide for Parents, Schools, and Communities.* Arlington, Va.: American Association of School Administrators, 1991, p. 3. Used with permission.

**BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM**

| *Desired outcome in children* | *Adult roles or tasks* |
|---|---|
| **A sense of security** | • Define procedures and routines.<br>• Involve students in defining the rules.<br>• Enforce the rules in ways that preserve self-respect.<br>• Foster personal responsibility. |
| **A sense of identity or self-concept** | • Honor the uniqueness of individuals.<br>• Build positive self-images.<br>• Demonstrate acceptance and caring.<br>• Build awareness of strengths and weaknesses. |
| **A sense of belonging** | • Create an accepting environment.<br>• Reduce feelings of isolation.<br>• Provide opportunities to be of service.<br>• Encourage bonding and develop group pride. |
| **A sense of purpose** | • Convey expectations.<br>• Build confidence and faith in abilities.<br>• Strengthen values.<br>• Help in setting goals. |
| **A sense of competence** | • Point out options and alternatives.<br>• Provide encouragement and support.<br>• Provide feedback.<br>• Celebrate success. |

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## Conflict Prevention and Resolution

Conflicts and behavioral problems in school must be considered from a multidimensional point of view; that is, they should be seen not as isolated incidents but as symptoms of deeper psychosocial problems. A comprehensive solution to those problems includes improving the school climate; providing instruction on the causes of conflict and

constructive conflict resolution methods; assimilating gang-oriented students into the mainstream (academically, extracurricularly, and socially); and facilitating better relationships between students and staff.

Effective strategies include the following:

1. Provide experiences that sensitize students to the cultures and values of others.
2. Promote better interpersonal relationships among minority groups.
3. Develop conflict resolution mechanisms to handle conflict and racial tensions. Advisory councils that include gang leaders can provide an opportunity for peer pressure to be positive instead of negative and utilize gang members as problem solvers. Council participants have the opportunity to experience a sense of accomplishment, which is reinforced through recognition of their efforts.
4. Provide assertiveness training to teach students and school personnel to stand up for their rights and beliefs in nonaggressive, nonviolent, and nonassaultive ways. This training should be available in the languages appropriate for each site as well as in a manner that can be understood by students with special needs.
5. Have faculty members from varied ethnic backgrounds discuss with students the racial or ethnic motivations for gang affiliation. Staff members also can address the problems causing and resulting from gang membership and methods to avoid such conflict.
6. Provide training on gang issues for parents in a forum that allows for discussion, questions, and advice. Ensure that the training is offered at a time conducive to parents' schedules and that it is well publicized. Inform parents as soon as possible about the suspicion of their child's involvement in gangs or gang activity. The gang member can easily hide the fact of gang membership or involvement from his or her parents or guardians because, too often, parents and guardians do not recognize gang paraphernalia. (See Appendix D for a sample letter to parents on gang prevention and awareness.)
7. Allocate stipends and encourage parents' participation in classroom supervision, tutoring, and assistance and in recreational tasks. Parents involved on the campus feel more pride and ownership, participate more readily in school disciplinary procedures, and provide an opportunity for children to see that their parents are interested in them.
8. Develop guidelines for identifying students whose families are dysfunctional and noncooperative. Establish family-oriented programs focused on gang diversion through parent-effectiveness training, which includes defining parental roles and children's

need for discipline; family counseling; family communication and problem solving; and support groups. In some areas county crisis intervention personnel are available to conduct parenting sessions for schools.

9. Train teachers in gang mediation. Training should be offered by community and law enforcement gang specialists. Educators who learn to work with gang members can reduce hostility between rival gangs.
10. Have teachers communicate with other professionals who work with gang members about the behavior, tardiness, absences, and academic progress of identified gang members.
11. Coordinate with juvenile justice agencies the reentry and supervision of students who return from juvenile hall or court disposition and students who are on probation. Provide intensive supervision and establish behavioral contracts in which students agree to achieve stated objectives and their parents (or other responsible persons) agree to monitor the students' progress.

## Effective Communication with Gang Members

Gang misbehavior and violence are symptoms of social, psychological, or family dysfunction. Many problems can be prevented by understanding the dynamics of gang behavior, learning how to deal with it, and finding out what alternatives and resources are available. Some strategies for dealing with gang members are the following:

1. Improve communication with all school staff members, including categorical specialists, about gang activities and students' involvement in gangs.
2. Use law enforcement and juvenile justice personnel to conduct regularly scheduled in-service training to keep staff informed about student subgroup affiliations; the names, territories, and methods of operation of gangs; and the graffiti, clothing, colors, and other identifying characteristics of gangs.
3. Develop crisis intervention policies and committees, coordinated with law enforcement personnel, to ensure prompt and appropriate responses if a crisis arises.
4. Provide support and training for teachers in empowering students to improve their self-esteem and develop self-motivation and positive leadership skills.
5. Deal with students who are gang members in the same manner you deal with other students. Reinforce positive behavior, cooperation, and self-responsibility and apply consequences to threat-

ening antisocial or disruptive actions to reduce the attractiveness of such behavior. Deal with threats and hard looks seriously.

6. Develop an understanding with gang members that school is off limits to gangs and gang activity.
7. Deal with gang members individually. In confrontational situations, focus on the nonleaders rather than the leaders to diminish the strength of the group.
8. Use time-out areas. Assign rooms that can be used as cooling-off areas for students. Removed from confrontational situations, students can discuss inappropriate behavior with staff.
9. When a fight occurs or is about to occur, isolate the combatants. This tactic reduces the possibility of the combatants being seen as heroes by their gang members and avoids reinforcing their strength as disruptive individuals. Do not tolerate any fight on campus. Impose strict, consistent consequences. Use local law enforcement officials as a backup.
10. Develop student contracts that encourage and reinforce improved behavior. By this method the student agrees to achieve stated objectives by entering into a contract with parents, peers, school staff, or volunteers, who monitor the student's progress.
11. Involve parents when misbehavior persists. Parents can reinforce school discipline and increase the staff's understanding of personal situations or other circumstances affecting the student. When informed of misbehavior, parents will more readily support alternative classes, learning contracts, or other intervention strategies. Remember that students easily hide their gang involvement from parents or guardians.
12. Develop on-site suspension programs, success-oriented schools, adjustment schools, community service programs, and other programs designed to remove disruptive students from regular classes, resolve the students' problems, and, eventually, return the students to regular classrooms.
13. If prevention and diversionary efforts fail, remove identified serious habitual offenders from regular school settings and place them in highly supervised, structured settings closely coordinated with juvenile justice agencies. Develop case management procedures for these offenders.
14. Develop gang leader diversion programs, cooperatively conducted by school, law enforcement, and community personnel, which provide positive activities for gang leaders. Work experience, job training, academic enrichment, tutoring, supervised recreation, sports, and affiliations with other organizations help to redirect gang leaders.

**Deal with students who are gang members in the same manner you deal with other students. Reinforce positive behavior, cooperation, and self-responsibility and apply consequences to threatening antisocial or disruptive actions to reduce the attractiveness of such behavior.**

## Resistance to Peer Pressure

Acceptance by one's peers is profoundly important to most youths. Also important are the needs for security, companionship, recognition, and a sense of belonging. Therefore, a youth's ability to resist the negative influence of peers leading to behavior such as drug and gang involvement is essential.

Gang prevention programs in elementary and middle grades should include training in peer-resistance skills. Without those resistance skills and strong, positive social connections, youths can find that gang involvement fills many voids in their lives. They can gain a sense of power, recognition, and purpose as well as an instant "family" from their association with gang members. In addition, students may realize an economic gain through drug dealing or extortion and an excitement from committing criminal activities. If youths are to see beyond the immediate attraction of gangs, they must have support systems in their schools and community to meet their social, familial, and emotional needs.

Youths need skills to make wise decisions, set goals, and resist negative peer influence. Schools—with the assistance of parents, community, and law enforcement personnel—play a vital role in helping youths develop those skills. When staff members in elementary and middle schools develop a strong sequential strategy for gang prevention, they create a program that goes far beyond informing students of the disadvantages and dangers of gangs. Staff members use instructional methods aimed at developing resistance to peer pressure; establish a curriculum that engages regular and special needs students and provides opportunities for success; organize extracurricular activities that give students the sense of belonging; and reinforce students' decision-making skills.

Goals that help students build resistance to negative peer pressure must be incorporated into the instructional program. These goals include the following:

1. Understand the major steps of decision making.
2. Understand how feelings and attitudes affect decision-making behavior.
3. Understand the concept of short-term and long-term goal setting.
4. Determine why resistance to gangs is important.
5. Become involved in positive options, such as intramural sports and special interest clubs.
6. Understand how values affect decisions, especially decisions related to peer pressure.

## Discipline and Code of Conduct

The role of schools is to provide safe, secure campuses in which students can learn and teachers can teach effectively. Policies, expecta-

tions, discipline, and codes of conduct should set the standard for all students. Regulations should communicate clear expectations and ensure consistent enforcement of known and understood rules and disciplinal policies. Specific emphasis needs to be placed on gang activity and gang-related problems. The goal in working with gang members is not to isolate them but to resocialize and mainstream them through activities that provide incentives and recognition for productivity and impose consequences for gang involvement.

School staff members should consider the following recommendations when they are developing a policy on discipline and code of conduct:

1. Establish a firm and fair policy on discipline that reflects an attitude of community unity within the campus.
2. Ensure that all school staff know that the identification and prevention of gang activity is a high priority.
3. Handle violations of discipline administratively and criminal violations through the criminal justice system. Assist teachers in recognizing the difference between criminal behavior and disciplinary problems. For example, the possession of drugs and weapons or assaults on teachers or other students are illegal, and law enforcement officials should be summoned.
4. Deal with gang activity or gang behavior immediately by calling in school officials and law enforcement officials. Firm and consistent treatment communicates to students, parents, and the community that gangs will not be tolerated. Gang members should be dealt with individually to wean them from identifying with the gang. Reinforcing appropriate behavior while enforcing clear-cut consequences for negative behavior reduces the attractiveness of gang activity.
5. Establish reporting procedures that encourage immediate and accurate reporting and safety for the reporter.
6. Develop policies and procedures that allow for the effective exchange of information between the school and law enforcement, juvenile justice, and social service agencies. Clarify issues of confidentiality when important information about family histories, medical records, court records, and school records need to be shared for investigations and case dispositions (see Appendix E).

## School Security

Creating a school climate and social environment that are internally safe, peaceful, and positive is important. Establishing a physical environment that reflects pride, ownership, and order is equally important. Systems should be developed and implemented to deal with disruption, intruders, and gang activity. The following suggestions should assist schools in planning for a safe physical environment:

**Develop policies and procedures that allow for the effective exchange of information between the school and law enforcement, juvenile justice, and social service agencies.**

1. Enforce the idea that the school is a safe and neutral zone. Allow no gang confrontations or intimidation of other students to occur on campus.
2. Hire nonteaching personnel to help monitor behavior, enforce policies on tardiness and truancy, and ensure students are in their classrooms.
3. Require administrative staff, teachers, and counselors to be visible in lunch rooms, restrooms, hallways, and classrooms.
4. Prohibit students' access to cars during school hours to reduce the use of pagers and car phones, which are often used in illegal drug sales.
5. Assess the length of passing periods between classes and shorten those time periods, if possible, to minimize disruptive peer influence.
6. Limit and supervise the entry, movement, and exit of persons on the school grounds and within school buildings. Designate one entrance for visitors admitted to the campus during school hours and post appropriate signs identifying that procedure.
7. Install a decorative fence with gates between campus buildings and lock the gates at night to prevent vandalism. Some gates can be locked during the day to control campus traffic patterns.
8. Increase the use of the school facility for community activities to enhance community ownership.
9. Develop a simple, efficient information management system to track crimes in the school. The most useful system will provide administrators with an overview of school disruption patterns and answer the following questions: What happened? What characterized victims and perpetrators? Where did the incident occur? How serious was it? What response was taken?

# 3

# SCHOOL AND SCHOOL DISTRICT RESPONSES TO GANGS

Many schools and school districts have initiated a variety of actions to prevent or reduce the influence of gang activity on school campuses. Such actions include the development of graffiti removal teams, school safety policies banning gang attire and symbols on campus, lists of school gang members, policies related to search and seizure on school campuses, a gang resistance curriculum, and partnerships with other organizations.

## Graffiti Removal Teams

Gang graffiti should be removed from school grounds or community locations immediately. Allowing graffiti to remain on buildings, fences, and other property encourages further vandalism and legitimizes the messages contained in the graffiti. When graffiti are removed immediately, the message to the responsible gang members is that such behavior is not tolerated. Graffiti removal teams play an important role in invalidating the claim made by gang members about their authority and deprive gang members of the satisfaction of knowing other people saw their messages. The immediate removal of graffiti results in less student reaction to the statements made in graffiti and keeps the school campus clean.

School officials should inspect the campus daily for graffiti, paying special attention to restroom walls and doors. The inspections should take place as early in the day as possible so that removal can occur before large numbers of students have the opportunity to read the gangs' messages. Immediate reports to the graffiti removal team can prevent overreaction to the statements.

The graffiti removal teams should have a core of people who can respond immediately to reports of graffiti and can be supplemented by students who are tardy or have disciplinary problems. The teams will require fast access to an extra supply of paint and paintbrushes.

Before graffiti are removed, all incidents of graffiti should be photographed for intelligence gathering. This evidence can be helpful later in the prosecution of gang members and affirms gang prevention activities. Another suggestion is that the team develop files on the types of graffiti found and inform teachers so that they can be alert to similar graffiti on book covers and students' papers.

## School Safety and Dress Code Policies

The increase in the number of gangs in communities and the presence of gang activity on school campuses have motivated school personnel to consider dress-code policies as one means of minimizing the gangs' influence on school campuses. The philosophy behind such policies rests with the belief that wearing certain colors or items attributable to a gang can incite serious campus disruption. In 1993 the California Legislature recognized the possibility of campus disruption when it declared that "gang-related apparel" is hazardous to the health and safety of the school environment and authorized school district governing boards to adopt reasonable dress code regulations (*Education Code* Section 35183). However, dress codes pertaining to gang attire and symbols may be challenged on the basis of First Amendment rights.

Faced with the need to protect the safety of students while in the school, districts should consider adopting a *safe school policy* that bans gang attire and symbols on the school campus or at school-related events because of the clear possibility of gang activities and escalating safety problems. In addition, school districts should consider adopting reasonble dress code regulations because the regulations are required before schools can adopt their own dress code regulations (*Education Code* Section 35294.1) The California School Boards Association has adopted a sample board policy for possible use by school districts (see Appendix B). Each school board wishing to adopt such a school safety policy pertaining to dress code regulations may wish to review and modify, as needed, portions of the policy statement. The board-approved policy should be posted in each classroom.

## Lists of School Gang Members

Early identification and intervention programs are effective in reducing gang involvement on and off school campuses. An accurate list of students who claim to be gang members is an important tool for reducing gang-related activity on campuses. The list can be generated through cooperative relations with local law enforcement officials or through contacts made with feeder schools. When given the names of students who have become members of gangs or who are still considering membership, school staff members can direct special attention to those students and be alert to behaviors that could endanger other people on campus. The information about gang membership needs to be shared with local law enforcement officials so that, together, they and school officials can monitor and control gang activities in and around the school.

It is especially important to know the names of gang leaders. In conflicts and especially in gang confrontations, the real leaders are usually smart enough to stay in the background. Those leaders need to be identified and worked with so that they can be part of the solution; or

they should be isolated so that they do not contribute to the escalation or continuation of the problem.

## Search and Seizure Issues on School Campuses

Because of the prevalence of gang activity connected to drugs and weapons, teachers, administrators, and other school staff need to know the basic rules for conducting a search of lockers, school property, and students' property.[1] School personnel have a duty to protect all staff and students from the risk of harm and to maintain a safe school environment. At times this duty includes conducting searches on campuses and seizing drugs or weapons.

The law requires that before a school search is conducted, the educator must have a *reasonable suspicion* that the student is engaging in behavior that is in violation of the law or of school rules. Courts will expect the searcher to:

- Explain clearly the reasons for the suspicion and the facts surrounding the incident.
- Connect the student who is searched to the violation of laws and rules.
- Search only students who are likely to possess evidence of the crime or rule violation.
- Rely on recent and credible information from personal knowledge or observation and from other eyewitnesses.

Reasonable suspicion can include knowledge of previous similar illegal activity in that area, suspicious movements or illicit behavior, or prior contacts with the student for similar illegal behavior.

The law also requires that school searches be no more extensive than is *reasonably necessary*. The greater the need for the immediate protection of students or staff, the broader the scope of the search. The court will expect the searcher to:

- Intrude only so far as is reasonable under the circumstances to recover the drugs or weapon.
- Evaluate the seriousness of the violation when deciding how intensive the search should be.
- Take into account the student's age and sex.

The reasonable belief that a student possesses a loaded gun or dangerous drugs would justify a broader search, including a search of the student, locker, book bag, purse, desk, or vehicle. The loss of a small amount of money or an object of minimal value does not justify as extensive a search or one requiring a student to remove clothing. California law now prohibits educators from doing strip searches or body

[1] The text for this section was adapted from the brochure entitled *Search and Seizure Issues on School Campuses*, (1990) provided as a courtesy by the Ventura County School/Law Enforcement Partnership. See also Appendix C for CSBA Sample Board Policy on Search and Seizure.

cavity searches. Seek legal advice and assistance from an attorney or law enforcement personnel when the facts appear to warrant such a search.

## Gang Resistance Curriculum

Most youths are not sophisticated enough to see beyond tomorrow. Realistic programs must be developed to show young people that there are worlds they never dreamed existed. Although gang members are often conditioned not to see beyond the boundaries of their neighborhoods, education can show them that alternatives do exist. Educators can help these young people see the value of obtaining skills that provide a place for them in a productive society. Youths remain in gangs only as long as gangs make them feel powerful and needed; but youths can be taught to set attainable goals and to strive for those goals.

With an effective curriculum, schools can foster healthy feelings of self-worth, independence, and responsibility, thus reducing the attraction of gang membership. Programs can emphasize the value of cooperation and collaboration producing skills that add to the student's sense of control over his or her life and learning. Positive social skills curricula also increase the student's sense of ownership of the school. In planning and selecting the curriculum, consider the following recommendations:

**Realistic programs must be developed to show young people that there are worlds they never dreamed existed. Although gang members are often conditioned not to see beyond the boundaries of their neighborhoods, education can show them that alternatives do exist.**

1. Learn what the local gang issues are and design lessons that match those issues. Include lessons on nonviolent conflict resolution, self-esteem, positive leadership, and alternatives to gang involvement.
2. Incorporate into the curriculum for both elementary and secondary students lessons that discourage gang participation and activity and propose constructive alternatives. For example, include lessons on positive character development and responsibility, which promote student citizenship.
3. Establish school-based programs that combine lessons in gang prevention and drug/substance abuse prevention taught jointly by teachers and law enforcement personnel at school sites. The correlation between drugs and gangs is strong, and the success of drug abuse prevention programs makes the strategies they currently use worthy of replication in dealing with gangs.
4. Use gang members as problem solvers by creating a strong, cooperative learning program within each classroom. Cooperative learning gives individual gang members opportunities to work toward common goals shared by other students outside the gang. If possible, ensure heterogeneity by assigning only one gang member to each learning group and closely follow the established techniques of cooperative learning.
5. Develop programs to teach anger management, coping and communication skills, interpersonal skills, assertiveness skills, and other violence prevention strategies.

6. Develop programs designed to teach skills in negotiation, decision making, leadership, cooperation, and social development.
7. Establish the expectation that academic classes are for everyone and that each student can achieve, given adequate support. Provide tutoring for low-performing students.
8. Expand programs which broaden students' experiences in art, music, and athletics.
9. Develop programs that make the transition from elementary school to junior/middle school and from junior/middle school to high school more comfortable for students. The fear factor of those transitions leaves many students attracted to the offer of gang protection.

## Partnerships with Other Organizations

Establishing and maintaining interagency partnerships with law enforcement departments, other juvenile justice agencies, and the community is essential for effective development of school safety programs and especially for gang prevention and suppression efforts. If interagency committees or agreements already exist, the issue of gangs can be added to the agendas. If there is no interagency group, form an antidrug, antigang coordinating committee for the purpose of sharing information, plans, and ideas.

Law enforcement agencies, juvenile justice agencies, schools, and the community need one another. Gang activity and drugs are potentially the most disruptive elements with which schools and society at large must deal. The most successful approaches involve the combined and coordinated efforts of schools (educators, students, and parents); law enforcement and probation/parole offices; social service agencies; businesses; the religious community; judges; elected officials; city and county officials; the military; and related community-based organizations (e.g., youth organizations and drug diversion programs).

Effective management of the influence of gangs on campus begins with an accurate assessment of the current gang situation both on the campus and in the community. Gangs are community elements that spill over onto school campuses; therefore, schools must depend on law enforcement and other juvenile justice agencies to provide the schools with accurate information about the levels of gang activity in the surrounding community. With this information schools can initiate cooperative and proactive programs to address the problem as it exists.

Whether the effort is to eradicate an existing sphere of gang influence or to prevent the gang's infiltration into a campus, interagency linkages are a key element to ensuring the maintenance of a conducive learning environment. The school can initiate the following activities, which illustrate interagency collaboration:

1. Develop strong ties between school and home through the development of parent-education and volunteer programs. Get parents to assist in the classroom or provide other school services that give the parents the opportunity to feel involved and allow their children to see their interest and commitment.
2. Develop an effective media plan. Arrange an agreement with the media not to publish names of gangs involved in crime-related incidents. This plan reduces the motivation of rival gangs to gain equal attention and avoids giving gangs credit for criminal actions.
3. Set up a town meeting and invite community merchants, business representatives, and social service providers to address the issues of gangs and drugs. Develop ways to integrate the school and the community to provide more opportunities that meet students' needs (e.g., adopt-a-school programs, mentor programs for at-risk youths, peer counseling, adopt-a-youth programs, Big Brother/Sister).
4. Use the entire community to support gang diversion and suppression efforts that will meet some of the needs for recognition, training, and belonging that youths may seek in gangs.
5. Invite business, military, and government representatives to provide information on career opportunities.
6. Seek support from local businesses and industries to create community vocational employment training and placement programs.
7. Invite law enforcement and juvenile justice representatives to the campus for nonenforcement activities to promote positive relationships between those agencies and students and to foster positive attitudes toward the law.
8. Assess security needs. Consider using contract security guards, school police, or local law enforcement officers.
9. Promote high visibility of security measures. Enlist law enforcement support to patrol the school's perimeter before, during, and after school hours.
10. Establish formal memoranda of understanding outlining policies and working relationships with juvenile justice and other youth-serving agencies.
11. Use the expertise of street gang specialists and officers from specialized gang units of local law enforcement and probation departments in training school administrators, staff, and parents. Use that expertise in coordinating collaborative prevention and intervention efforts.

12. Work with existing community delinquency prevention committees or county task forces to design, coordinate, and implement programs to reduce delinquent behavior.
13. Develop policies, procedures, and interagency agreements that allow for the effective exchange of information between law enforcement, juvenile justice, and social service agencies and the school. Clarify issues of confidentiality when important information about family histories, medical records, court records, and school records need to be shared for thorough investigations and case dispositions (see Appendix E).
14. Work with law enforcement personnel and the juvenile court as cases progress through court. The purpose is to gather information, track victim/witness issues, and provide mutual follow-up and feedback so that schools know the outcome of cases.
15. If prevention and diversion efforts fail, remove identified serious habitual offenders from regular school settings and place them in highly supervised, structured settings closely coordinated with juvenile justice agencies.
16. Share information on gang activities among state agencies, law enforcement officials, educators, and others involved in gang control to increase the effectiveness of other gang suppression efforts. Areas with clearly identified youth gang problems should establish gang information systems and clearinghouses for all concerned personnel. This information sharing can be vital in certain situations, such as when gang leaders are incarcerated. At that time gang members may be more open to intervention strategies conducted by community workers and law enforcement personnel.

**Use the expertise of street gang specialists and officers from specialized gang units of local law enforcement and probation departments in training school administrators, staff, and parents. Use that expertise in coordinating collaborative prevention and intervention efforts.**

# 4

# ROLES WITHIN THE EDUCATION COMMUNITY

Effective gang prevention and intervention programs exist when schools, school districts, school boards, parents, law enforcement agencies, probation departments, and community agencies collaborate and cooperate to initiate and maintain the strategies that minimize the influence of gangs. Each group has an important role in keeping gangs out of the schools. There must be a collective attitude that supports schools in taking aggressive action against crime, violence, fear, and disruption associated with gang activities on school campuses. That attitude must be expressed in a commitment to create environments that foster self-worth, belonging, self-discipline, responsibility, competency, and recognition in every student, thus counteracting the attractiveness of gang membership.

## School Boards

School boards have a key role in keeping gangs out of schools. Because youth gangs have great potential for disrupting the learning environment, school boards play an important part in reducing and preventing gang activity. The board must reassure school district and school-site personnel that calls for help in fighting gangs will not reflect adversely on their careers. Instead, credit should be given to those who call for the support of law enforcement, probation, and community agencies. By rewarding those who take action, school boards become partners in fighting the influence of gangs on campuses.

The board can issue a statement that articulates why board action is needed (e.g., because of the financial costs of crime, the need to improve academic scores, and the need to reduce the number of dropouts and truants) and develop an action plan and evaluation plan for district administrators to follow.

## School District Office

The school district office is responsible for implementing the school board's policy statement. This responsibility includes training school-site administrative staff to train their school staff on the policy; promoting the reasons for the action (e.g., to ensure safety, enhance the learning environment, improve test scores, and build the character and self-esteem of students); developing action plans for school-site implementation; evaluating and recommending revision of the plan as necessary;

and developing, providing, and purchasing curriculum materials and training modules for school-site administrators.

### School-Site Administrators

The school-site administrator is responsible for implementing the policy at the school site; developing ownership of the action plan; training the school staff (classified and certificated) and parents; addressing the goals and objectives mandated by the board; establishing and maintaining interagency relationships and working agreements; developing and conducting training for the community; implementing activities to promote a positive school climate; pursuing business partnerships; and involving parents in school activities, policy formation, and planning.

### Teachers and School Staff

Teachers and school staff are responsible for being aware of signs and symptoms of gang activity and for taking a positive approach in working with students, in listening and talking to them, and in evaluating their educational needs and actions. School staff members should seek outside assistance and referrals, when necessary, and teachers should develop and implement classroom strategies that fulfill the commitment to create positive learning environments for all students.

### Parents

Parents are responsible for taking an active role in helping to create a positive school climate. Parents should be encouraged to help develop and support the policies and codes established by the school. They should provide feedback and support to school administrators; help monitor classroom activities; and promote pride and ownership of the school. In general, parents should provide the basic foundations of awareness, responsibility, and respect—skills necessary for students to succeed in school and in life.

**The board can issue a statement that articulates why board action is needed (e.g., because of the financial costs of crime, the need to improve academic scores, and the need to reduce the number of dropouts and truants) and develop an action plan and evaluation plan for district administrators to follow.**

# CSBA Sample Board Policy

## Students BP 5136(a)

## Gangs

Note: All parts of this optional policy and regulation are provided as suggestions only and may be modified as desired.

The Governing Board desires to keep district schools and students free from the threats or harmful influence of any groups or gangs which advocate drug use, violence, or disruptive behavior. The principal or designee shall maintain continual, visible supervision of school premises so as to deter gang intimidation of students and confrontations between members of different gangs.

*(cf. 5131.4 - Campus Disturbances)*

The Superintendent or designee shall establish open lines of communication with local law enforcement authorities so as to share information and provide mutual support in this effort.

Note: *Education Code* 51265 urges districts to give high priority to inservice programs on gang violence and substance abuse prevention education. CDE guidelines in this area, required by *Education Code* 51264, are currently being prepared.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide inservice training which helps staff to identify gangs and gang symbols, recognize early manifestations of disruptive activities, and respond appropriately to gang behavior. Staff shall be informed about conflict management techniques and alerted to intervention measures and community resources which may help our students.

### Prevention Education

Note: According to the National School Safety Center's *Gangs in Schools*, early prevention programs in grades 3, 4, and 5 are considered the most effective way to stop gang activity. The following optional section may be revised as desired.

The Board realizes that many students become involved in gangs without understanding the consequences of gang membership. Early intervention is a key component of efforts to break the cycle of gang membership. Therefore, gang violence prevention education in the schools shall start with students in grade 3.

**BP 5136(b)**

## Gang Symbols

Note: Because any policy restricting free expression may be challenged on the basis of first amendment rights or student rights under *Education Code* 48907, districts should adopt the following policy only if gang problems exist or are clearly expected. *Education Code* 48907 gives California students the right to wear buttons, badges and other insignia as an expression of free speech. This expression may not be prohibited unless it so incites students as to create a clear and present danger of the commission of unlawful acts on school premises, the violation of lawful school regulations, or the substantial disruption of the school's orderly operation. The district therefore should make these requisite findings regarding gang symbols.

The Board prohibits the presence of any apparel, jewelry, accessory, notebook or manner of grooming which, by virtue of its color, arrangement, trademark or any other attribute, denotes membership in gangs which advocate drug use, violence, or disruptive behavior. This policy shall be applied at the principal's discretion, after consultation with the Superintendent or designee, as the need for it arises at individual school sites.

*(cf. 6145.5 - Organizations/Associations)*

Legal Reference:

*Education Code*
51264 Educational inservice training; CDE guidelines
51265 Gang violence and drug and alcohol abuse prevention inservice training
*Penal Code*
186.22 Participation in criminal street gang
13826–13826.7 Gang violence suppression

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# CSBA Sample Administrative Regulation

**Students** **AR 5136(a)**

## Gangs

At the principal's discretion, staff may use the following techniques to discourage the influence of gangs:

1. Any student wearing or carrying overt gang paraphernalia or making gestures that symbolize gang membership shall be referred to the principal or designee. The student's parent/guardian shall be contacted and the student sent home to change clothes if necessary.

2. Any gang graffiti on school premises shall be quietly removed, washed down or painted over as soon as discovered.

   a. Daily checks for graffiti shall be made throughout the campus, including restroom walls and doors.

> Note: The California Office of Criminal Justice Planning recommends the actions described in the following paragraph.

   b. Graffiti shall be photographed before it is removed. These photographs will be shared with local law enforcement authorities and used in future disciplinary or criminal action against the offenders.

3. Classroom and after-school programs at each school shall be designed to enhance individual self-esteem, provide positive reinforcement for acceptable behavior, and foster interest in a variety of wholesome activities.

4. Staff shall actively promote membership in authorized student organizations which can provide students companionship, safety, and a sense of purpose and belonging.

> Note: To further discourage the influence of gangs, gang prevention experts recommend that school rules of conduct be enforced consistently and that all students have access to counselors as needed.

**AR 5136(b)**

### Gang Prevention Education

Note: *Penal Code* 13826.65 requires that districts and county offices receiving gang violence suppression program funds through the Office of Criminal Justice Planning implement a gang violence prevention curriculum and provide gang violence prevention and intervention services for school-aged children. To see a list of available gang violence prevention curricula, materials and audiovisual resources, any district with a computer, telecommunication software and a modem can dial 714-966-4313 to access the Orange County electronic bulletin board system's "curriculum clearinghouse on school safety."

The following section should be modified as desired so as to reflect the instructional program offered by the district.

Gang prevention instruction offered in the schools shall:

1. Explain the dangers of gang membership.
2. Include lessons or role-playing workshops in nonviolent conflict resolution and gang avoidance skills.
3. Promote constructive activities available in the community.
4. Involve students in structured, goal-oriented community service projects.
5. Encourage positive school behavior.

Gang prevention lessons may be taught jointly by teachers and law enforcement staff.

### Community Outreach

Note: The following optional section is offered for districts that wish to present gang education programs for parents/guardians or the community as well as providing instruction for students.

Gang prevention classes or counseling offered for parents/guardians shall address the following topics:

1. The dangers of gang membership.
2. The nature of local gang apparel and graffiti.
3. Ways to deal effectively with one's children.
4. Warning signs which may indicate that children are at risk of becoming involved with gangs.

# AR 5136(c)

Community programs offered for staff, parents/guardians, churches, city officials, business leaders and the media shall address:

1. The scope and nature of local gang problems.

2. Ways that each segment of the community can help to alleviate these problems.

### Intervention Measures

Staff shall make every effort to assimilate gang-oriented students into the academic, extracurricular and social mainstream and into work experience programs. To this end:

1. Staff members shall be provided with the names of known gang members.

2. Insofar as possible, classroom teachers shall assign individual gang-oriented students to cooperative learning groups in which they may work toward common goals with students who are not members of their gang.

3. Students who seek help in rejecting gang associations may be referred to community-based gang suppression and prevention organizations.

Note: To identify available community-based resources, the California Office of Criminal Justice Planning (OCJP) has prepared a statewide directory of anti-gang resources, available from the OCJP Gang Violence Suppression Branch, 916-327-3676. OCJP's anti-gang hotline, 1-800-782-7163, can be used to anonymously report gang activity and also provides referrals to available community resources.

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# CSBA Sample Board Policy

## Students BP 5132(a)

## Dress and Grooming

The Governing Board believes that appropriate dress and grooming contribute to a productive learning environment. The Board expects students to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to wear clothes that are suitable for the school activities in which they participate. Students have the right to make individual choices from a wide range of clothing and grooming styles, but they must not present a health or safety hazard or a distraction which would interfere with the educational process.

*(cf. 4119.22 - Dress and Grooming (staff))*

*(cf. 5145.2 - Freedom of Speech/Expression)*

When gangs constitute a danger to students, the Superintendent or designee may restrict student dress and grooming as necessary to comply with Board policy related to gang activity.

*(cf. 5136 - Gangs)*

Students and parents/guardians shall be informed about the school dress code at the beginning of the year and when revised. A student who violates the dress code shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

*(cf. 5144 - Discipline)*

Note: Some educators have expressed the view that uniforms might prevent problems related to inappropriate or gang-related clothing, peer rivalry and the theft of expensive items. However, in *Hartzell v. Connell* (1984. 35 Cal. 3d 899), the California Supreme Court stated that public schools may not charge a fee for any activity that is part of the regular school system. It is arguable that requiring uniforms would be considered a violation of *Hartzell* since the cost of the uniform could be deemed a "fee." However, given the recent decision by the California Supreme Court in *Arcadia Unified School District v. State Department of Education* (92 Daily Journal, D.A.R. 3578), it is possible that a court might find clothing was not an "essential element of school activity" and therefore allow such a uniform requirement. One possible solution may be for districts to provide a source of financial support for obtaining uniforms. The following optional paragraph delegates authority for a voluntary uniform dress policy to the site level. As this area is not free from doubt, this paragraph may be deleted or revised as appropriate in consultation with legal counsel.

## BP 5132(b)

The Board recognizes that in schools where the students wear school uniforms, incidences of inappropriate apparel, peer rivalry and theft are reduced. When local circumstances indicate the existence of serious problems associated with student dress, school sites may implement a voluntary uniform dress policy provided there is demonstrated parental support. School sites may request Board approval for a required uniform dress policy if conditions warrant such action and a source of funding is available for uniforms for students whose parents/guardians cannot afford to pay for them.

*(cf. 0420 - School-Based Management/Site Councils)*

Legal Reference:

*Education Code*
48907 Student exercise of free expression
49066 Grades; effect of physical education class apparel
*Code of Regulations, Title 5*
302 Pupils to be neat and clean on entering school
*Hartzell v. Connell* (1984) 35 Cal. 3d 899
*Arcadia Unified School District v. State Department of Education*, 92 Daily Journal D.A.R. 3578

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# CSBA Sample Administrative Regulation

**Students** **AR 5132(a)**

## Dress and Grooming

Note: In many districts, dress code regulations are established at the site level. Select one of the following options.

OPTION 1: In cooperation with teachers, students and parents/guardians, the principal or designee shall establish and regularly review school rules which reflect Board policy governing student dress and grooming.

OPTION 2: In cooperation with teachers, students and parents/guardians, the principal or designee shall regularly review the following district regulations and may establish additional school rules governing dress and grooming.

Note: The following material may be used as a basis for either administrative regulations or school site rules. It should be revised to reflect local standards and practice.

The following guidelines shall apply to all regular school activities:

1. Shoes must be worn at all times. Sandals must have heel straps. Thongs or backless shoes or sandals are not acceptable.

2. Clothing and jewelry shall be free of writing, pictures or any other insignia which are crude, vulgar, profane or sexually suggestive or which advocate racial, ethnic or religious prejudice or the use of drugs or alcohol.

3. Hats, caps and other head coverings shall not be worn indoors.

4. Clothes shall be sufficient to conceal undergarments at all times. See-through or fish-net fabrics, halter tops, off-the-shoulder or low-cut tops, bare midriffs and skirts or shorts shorter than mid-thigh are prohibited.

5. Gym shorts may not be worn in classes other than physical education.

6. Hair shall be clean and neatly groomed. Hair may not be sprayed by any coloring that would drip when wet.

## AR 5132(b)

Coaches and teachers may impose more stringent dress requirements to accommodate the special needs of certain sports and/or classes.

No grade of a student participating in a physical education class shall be adversely affected due to the fact that the student does not wear standardized physical education apparel where the failure to wear such apparel arises from circumstances beyond the student's control. (*Education Code* 49066)

The principal, staff, students and parent/guardians at each school may establish reasonable dress and grooming regulations for times when students are engaged in extracurricular or other special school activities.

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# CSBA Sample Board Policy

## Students BP 5145.12(a)

## Search and Seizure

Note: In *New Jersey v. T.L.O.* the U.S. Supreme Court held that the legality of a student search depends on the reasonableness of the search. The reasonableness of any search involves whether the search was justified at its inception and whether, as conducted, it was reasonably related in scope to the circumstances that justified the interference in the first place. Under ordinary circumstances, the search of a student by a school official is justified at its inception when there is reason to suspect that it will turn up evidence of a student's violation of the law or school rules. The search is permissible in scope when the measures adopted are reasonably related to the objectives of the search and not excessively intrusive in light of the student's age or sex and the nature of the infraction.

The Governing Board recognizes that incidents may occur which jeopardize the health, safety and welfare of students and staff and which necessitate the search and seizure of students, their property, or their lockers by school officials.

*(cf. 5145.11 - Questioning and Apprehension)*

School officials may search individual students and their property when there is a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover evidence that the student is violating the law or the rules of the district or the school. The Board urges that discretion, good judgment and common sense be exercised in all cases of search and seizure.

Note: Because the use of a metal detector is less intrusive than a physical search and therefore constitutes a minimal invasion of privacy, this tool is generally preferred over a frisk or pat-down when searching an individual for the possession of weapons.

When possible, staff shall use a metal detector when searching an individual for weapons.

The parent/guardian of a student subjected to an individualized search shall be notified by the district as soon after the search as possible.

### Student Lockers

Because lockers are under the joint control of the student and the district, school officials shall have the right and ability to open and inspect any school locker without student permission when they have reasonable suspicion that the search will disclose evidence of illegal possessions or activity or when odors, smoke, fire and/or other threats to student health, welfare or safety emanate from the locker.

## BP 5145.12(b)

Note: The courts have repeatedly held that the standard of reasonable suspicion applies to unannounced locker searches. Some districts, however, conduct regular, announced locker inspections. The following paragraph is optional.

For health and safety reasons, a general inspection of school properties such as lockers and desks may be conducted on a regular, announced basis, with students standing by their lockers or desks. Any items contained in a locker shall be considered to be the property of the student to whom the locker was assigned. Notice of this policy shall be given to all students when lockers are assigned.

### Random Search for Weapons

Note: A recent Attorney General opinion (75 *Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen.* 155 (1992)) states that the right of privacy guaranteed by the California Constitution does not prohibit reasonable use of metal detectors to deter the presence of weapons in schools. This opinion also states that local school officials are the appropriate authorities to determine, as a matter of policy, if, when, where and how metal detectors should be used. "Where a substantial safety problem exists, schools, at their discretion, may decide that metal detectors should be employed as part of a plan to keep weapons out." The following optional policy is offered for districts that desire to institute random metal detector searches for weapons. The first paragraph may be expanded to include reference to any specific incidents involving weapons that have occurred in the district.

The Board finds that the growing presence of weapons in the schools threatens the district's ability to provide the safe and orderly learning environment to which our students and staff are entitled. The Board also finds that random metal detector searches offer a reasonable means to keep weapons out of the schools and mitigate the fears of students and staff.

Note: *Education Code* 35294-35294.5 provides for the development of school safety plans; see BP 3515 - *School Safety and Security*. The Attorney General's opinion states that the reasonable use of metal detectors could be an integral part of such plans, determined at the site level. The Board also could determine the role of metal detectors within a comprehensive safety plan for the district, limiting their use to special events such as dances and athletic events or using them during regular school hours on a random or permanent basis. To ensure that a random search is reasonable, a preestablished administrative plan, such as scanning every fifth person, should be established and followed, thereby diminishing or eliminating the opportunity for officials to exercise arbitrary discretion. To minimize the intrusiveness of the search, students may be asked to empty their pockets and belongings of all metal objects before the scan.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish procedures which ensure that metal detector searches are conducted in a random fashion which excludes individual discretion as to who will be searched.

*(cf. 3515 - School Safety and Security)*
*(cf. 5131.6 - Alcohol and Other Drugs)*
*(cf. 5131.7 - Weapons and Dangerous Instruments)*
*(cf. 5144.1 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process)*

**BP 5145.12(c)**

## Use of Trained Dogs

Note: The following optional paragraphs and corresponding administrative regulation are based on a policy developed and adopted by the Newman-Crows Landing Unified School District. Although California courts do not appear to have addressed the legality of dog sniffing in schools, court decisions elsewhere (*Zamora v. Pomeroy*, 10th Cir. 1981, 639 F.2d 662 and *Horton v. Goose Creek Independent School District*, 5th Cir. 1982, 690 F.2d 470) indicate that dog sniffing around lockers and cars would probably not be deemed a search and would be permissible with or without individualized suspicion. If the dog then alerts on a particular car or locker, this could constitute the reasonable suspicion needed in order to conduct a search. *Horton* states, however, that the sniffing of a **person** is indeed a search which must be reasonable and should be justified by individualized suspicion.

It is conceivable that a dog could alert on an employee's work area or car. It is likely that under *O'Connor v. Ortega* (1987) 107 S.Ct. 1492, a dog sniff and subsequent search of the area would be found permissible using the same analysis as described for students above. However, some issues in this area are not free from doubt, so legal counsel should be consulted concerning individual situations.

In an effort to keep the schools free of drugs, the district may use specially trained nonaggressive dogs to sniff out and alert staff to the presence of substances prohibited by law or district policy. The dogs may sniff the air around lockers, desks, bags, items or vehicles on district property or at district-sponsored events as long as they are not allowed to sniff any person. Items shall not be sniffed if a person is close by.

The above inspections shall be unannounced and may be made at the discretion of the Superintendent or designee.

Students and parents/guardians shall be informed of this policy at the beginning of each school year.

Legal Reference:

*Education Code*
35160 Authority of governing boards
35160.1 Broad authority of school districts
35294–35294.5 School safety plans
49050–49051 Searches by school employees
49330–49334 Injurious objects
*Penal Code*
626.9 Firearms
626.10 Dirks, daggers, knives or razor; bringing into or possession of upon or within public school ground; exception
75 *Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen.* 155 (1992)
*New Jersey v. T.L.O.* (1985) 469 U.S. 325
*Zamora v. Pomeroy* (10th Cir. 1981) 639 F.2d 662
*Horton v. Goose Creek Independent School District* (5th Cir. 1982) 690 F.2d 470
*O'Connor v. Ortega* (1987) 107 S.Ct. 1492

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# CSBA Sample Administrative Regulation

**Students** **AR 5145.12(a)**

## Search and Seizure

### Individual Searches

In determining whether reasonable suspicion exists, school officials shall consider:

1. The student's age and previous behavior patterns.
2. The prevalence and seriousness in the school of the problem to which the search was directed.
3. The urgency requiring the search without delay.
4. The substantive value and reliability of the information used as a justification for the search.
5. The location of the student at the time of the incident which gave rise to reasonable suspicion.

Searches shall be made in the presence of at least one other district employee. Employees will not conduct strip searches or body cavity searches.

> Note: *Education Code* 49050 provides that no school employee shall conduct a body cavity search of a student, or any search that involves removing or arranging the student's clothing to permit visual inspection of his/her underclothes, breast, buttocks or genitalia.

### Random Search for Weapons

> Note: The following paragraph is for use by districts instituting random metal detector searches for weapons. To minimize the admittedly minor intrusion resulting from metal detector scans, the Attorney General recommends giving advance notice of random searches. Because no court decisions yet indicate whether prior notice to parents at the beginning of the year would be sufficient without giving separate notice for each search, the district, with legal counsel, should decide on a case-by-case basis whether a search will be announced or unannounced. If random searches are done only at the secondary level, the following paragraph should be revised to indicate this.

Upon enrollment and at the beginning of each school year, students and parents/guardians shall receive notice that the district uses random metal detector scans as part of its program to promote safety and deter the presence of weapons. Signs shall be posted at all schools to explain that anyone may be scanned by metal detector for guns, knives or other illegal weapons when on campus or attending athletic or extracurricular events.

## AR 5145.12(b)

Note: The Attorney General also suggests several procedures to further minimize the intrusion of privacy. The following items should be deleted or revised as appropriate for the type(s) of metal detectors that will be used.

The following procedures shall be followed when making metal detector scans:

1. Before walk-through, students shall be asked to empty their pockets of metal objects.
2. After an initial activation occurs, students shall be asked to walk through a second time.
3. If a second activation occurs, a hand-held metal detector will be used.
4. If the activation is not eliminated or explained, staff shall escort the student to a private area.
5. In the private area, an expanded search shall be conducted by a staff member of the same sex as the student.
6. The search shall be limited to the detection of weapons.

### Use of Trained Dogs

Dogs shall not be used in rooms occupied by persons except for demonstration purposes, with the handler present. When used for demonstration purposes, the dog may not sniff the person of any individual and shall be well separated from the audience.

Only the dog's official handler will determine what constitutes an alert by the dog. If the dog alerts on a particular item or place, the student having the use of that place or responsibility for it shall be called to witness the search. If a dog alerts on a locked vehicle, the student who brought it onto district property shall be asked to unlock it for inspection.

*(cf. 5144 - Discipline)*

*(cf. 5144.1 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process)*

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**APPENDIX D**

# Sample Letter for Use in Gang Prevention and Awareness

*The following sample letter (in English and Spanish) may be duplicated by schools, school districts, and county offices of education for use in their gang awareness and prevention activities.*

**School Letterhead**

Dear _____:

Your son/daughter, _____, while on the campus of _____ School, participated in an activity associated with gang conduct. Please see the box(es) checked below. I must bring this activity to your attention because of its potential escalation and serious consequences.

- ☐ *Showing colors:* blue, red, black, or beige. For example, wearing a blue cap, blue shirt, white T-shirt, black pants, or a Raider jacket in a certain way aligns the student with a particular gang. This practice includes exposing initials of designers. Many gangs have assigned their own definitions to certain initials.
- ☐ *Hand signs.* Making particular hand gestures signals gang affiliation or action.
- ☐ *Stare downs.* Stares are used as challenges to provoke fights.
- ☐ *Nicknames.* Individual gang names used are usually attached to some perceived attribute the member may have for gang purposes. The nickname tends to fit physical or psychological characteristics.
- ☐ *Tattoos.* Most gang-related tattoos are found on the member's hands, forearms, and, occasionally, the face. The tattoos vary depending on the age of the gang member.
- ☐ *Graffiti.* Graffiti include written and/or spray-painted challenges.
- ☐ *Physical confrontations.* Conflicts may involve one or more members against rival gang members.

Fortunately, only a small percentage of students are in gangs. Your son's/daughter's isolated actions do not mean he/she is necessarily a gang member. However, a continued pattern of behaviors associated with gangs is cause for serious concern and often indicates gang association or involvement. **This letter serves as official notice that if _____ participates in further gang-related conduct on this campus, he/she ultimately may be expelled from school.**

The presence of gang-related conduct and dress will not be tolerated on this school campus. It affects the safety and learning environment of *all* students and staff members. _____ School is serious about its responsibility to educate its students in a safe atmosphere, and we will take disciplinary action against those students who persist in gang-related conduct.

I ask for your cooperation to end these gang-related activities and behavior by your son/daughter. Please monitor the behavior of your child outside of school so that together we can help _____ make appropriate decisions for his/her future.

If I or any member of my staff can be of assistance to you, please feel free to contact me at _____.

Sincerely,

_____

Principal

**School Letterhead**

Estimado _____:

Su hijo/hija, _____, participó en una actividad típicamente asociada con las pandillas. Esta actividad, indicada abajo, ocurrió aquí en la Escuela _____. Le informo de lo ocurrido para evitar actividades más serias que traen graves consecuencias.

- *Muestra de colores*: Azul, rojo, negro o beige. Por ejemplo, un alumno que lleva una cachucha azul, una camisa azul, una camiseta blanca, un pantalón negro y una chamarra tipo Raider de cierta manera se asocia a veces con una pandilla. Este estilo de vestirse incluye la muestra de las iniciales de la marca de ropa. Muchas pandillas dan un significado propio a ciertas iniciales.
- *Señas con las manos*. Hacer ciertas señas con las manos para indicar afiliación o acción pandillera.
- *Reto con una mirada fija*. Esta acción representa un desafío para provocar una pelea.
- *Sobrenombres*. En la pandilla se dan sobrenombres a los miembros. Muchas veces estos sobrenombres se refieren a características físicas o psicológicas.
- *Tatuajes*. La mayoría de los tatuajes se graban en las manos, los brazos, y a veces en la cara. Estos tatuajes varían según la edad del individuo
- *"Placas"*. Estos son los grafitos escritos o pintados que representan un desafío a otras pandillas.
- *Peleas*. Las peleas pueden ser entre individuos o entre pandillas rivales.

Afortunadamente, sólo un bajo porcentaje del alumnado es pandillero. Las actividades de su hijo/hija no quieren decir que él /ella pertenezca a una pandilla. Sin embargo, la continuación de esta serie de actividades es alarmante y muchas veces indica una afiliación o participación pandillera. **Con esta carta le informamos oficialmente a vd. Que existe la posibilidad de que _____ será expulsado/expulsada de la escuela si sigue con las actividades indicadas.**

En esta escuela no se tolerará la conducta o ropa asociada con las pandillas que perjudica la seguridad y ambiente de *todos* los estudiantes y del personal docente. La Escuela _____ toma en serio su responsabilidad para dar clases en un ambiente seguro. La escuela está díspuesta a disciplinar a los alumnos que persistan en sus actividades pandilleras.

Le pido a Vd. su colaboración para acabar con dichas actividades de su hijo/hija. Por favor, vigile la conducta de su hijo/hija afuera de la escuela para que juntos podamos ayudar a _____ tomar decisiones apropiadas para su futuro.

Como director de esta escuela, la ofrezco mi ayuda, y la del personal de este plan. Llámenos al _____ para mayor información.

Atentamente,

_____
Director/Directora

**APPENDIX E**

# Sharing Confidential Information

At first glance, many agencies' rules seem to make information sharing impossible. A close examination of those rules, however, offers several ways of legally sharing information which allow for more informed decisions to be made about youths. At the same time, students have legitimate privacy concerns about this information, and it must be handled in a professional manner. Training in the access and proper dissemination of confidential information is a must as the interagency information sharing process is developed.

The courts control access to juvenile court records, probation records, social services records, and school records (see WIC §§ 825-830, and § 504). Juvenile law enforcement records may be shared with other law enforcement agencies or with any person or agency that has a legitimate need for the information for official disposition of a case (WIC § 828). Further, if a child has been found by the juvenile court to have committed a drug offense or a serious violent offense, school staff must be notified [WIC § 827(b)-(f)]. The availability of school records is governed by the federal Family Educational Rights to Privacy Act (20 USCA 1232g; 34CFR99, also called FERPA or the Buckley Amendment) and state statutes which are patterned on FERPA (EC §§ 49061-49077).

Interagency groups that wish to do joint case management and supervision of children who are involved in the juvenile court process may develop interagency policies and procedures. An excellent example of this type of activity is the serious habitual offender programs operating in California (WIC §§ 500-506). These programs have agencies working cooperatively to control the juvenile's behavior through improved supervision and services for these very active offenders.

The simplest and most frequently used method of obtaining records is to have the minor and his or her parents sign a written consent to release records to the requesting agencies. Most schools, probation departments, social services agencies, parole boards, and other agencies have used these consent or waiver forms successfully for years. It is quite rare for anyone to refuse to sign such a consent because they usually want to cooperate in the service plan for the child involved. Another simple way to legally share records is to obtain a general order from the juvenile court that authorizes interagency record sharing. Juvenile court judges have discretion to issue such orders, commonly known as *TNG* orders (*TNG v. Superior Court* 4 Cal. 3d 767, 1971), releasing juvenile court, school, and other agency records to appropriate agencies for governmental purposes. Each county juvenile court should have a *TNG* order on file, and school staff should obtain a copy. It can be modified, if necessary, to include all interagency partners working on school safety issues. The

From *Safe Schools: A Planning Guide for Action*. Sacramento: California Department of Education and the Office of the Attorney General, 1989, p. 22.

court is interested in promoting public safety, in assisting the juvenile justice system to function efficiently, and in basing its own decisions on the best information available. All of these goals can be facilitated with increased information access to child-serving agencies.

Thorough familiarity with juvenile and school records statutes, a good working relationship with the juvenile court judge, and an interagency commitment to organized information sharing will allow the school safety program to build a common information base to make better decisions about problem youth and to enhance campus safety for everyone.

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